

## SPF TRAINING MANUAL

### SECTION 2A

### COALITIONS

**OBJECTIVE:** To know what requirements/components of coalitions are necessary to function well enough to commence the SPF process in your community, as well as knowing what resources are available to enhance or train coalitions.

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This section of the training manual will cover the minimum requirements that a coalition must meet before progressing in the SPF process. This section should accompany other resources such as the Communities that Care (CTC) model, Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA) guidelines, or other research on coalitions. A list of these resources and relevant websites can be found at the end of this section.

According to the Center for Prevention Research and Development (CPRD) Research Brief “Evidence-Based Practices for Effective Community Coalitions: A Summary of Current Research”:

The major goals of these coalitions are to broaden the mission of member organizations and develop more comprehensive strategies; develop wider public support for issues/action; increase influence of community institutions over community policies and practices; minimize duplication of services; develop more financial and human resources; increase participation from diverse sectors and constituencies; exploit resources in changing environments; and increase accountability. Coalitions must also strive to improve their capacity to plan, implement, evaluate, and strengthen local organizations and institutions to better respond to the needs and aspirations of their constituents. (Chavis, 1995).

We want your coalition to have the resources to accomplish its goals and assist you through the SPF 5 Step process. A coalition is not a prevention strategy, but part of a comprehensive prevention plan. A coalition is a key component in the SPF Process because of the role it plays in all 5 steps. In fact, the coalition can help create the prevention plan for your community. The Research Brief cited above is included as an attachment to this section; you are encouraged to read it for the latest research on how your coalition can best contribute to your community's prevention plan.

One resource that is easy to access, and very in-depth, is the Communities that Care planning model. It will walk you through the different steps of the process of bringing key stakeholders to the table. If you would like assistance using this model, several coordinators, staff at the State Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health and WEST CAPT are available to provide this training in your community.

Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA) has a great wealth of knowledge on community coalitions. Edward Ho, Ph.D, an evaluator with Bach Harrison, L.L.C., has put out a great outline of “A Perfect World Vision of Effective Coalitions,” that compiles some of CADCA's essentials for coalitions. The point it is making is that we understand that every community will encounter different challenges in building an effective coalition. But these are the **goals**. We strive for excellence, but, in the meanwhile, we want the best coalition we can bring together. While your community may decide that your coalition would best function differently in some respects compared to that outlined in the “Perfect World” document, the document provides you with a view of how coalitions might operate that is different from how we tend to generally think of them (or experience them). We encourage you to share this document and its ideas with your coalition to generate a discussion about your coalition and how it sees itself functioning to ensure sustainability and effectiveness.

With your coalition's capacity and effectiveness in mind, the following Minimum Standards for Coalitions have been developed to ensure that your coalition is functioning at the minimum capacity necessary to effectively engage in the SPF process. The minimum requirements for each standard (as applicable and described below) should be met prior to proceeding with the rest of the SPF process. Because the community coalitions are an integral part of the entire SPF process, to begin with a sub par coalition would hinder the entire process and could ultimately cost your community time and resources if it was

necessary to go back to square one. However, we understand that coalitions can also be a part of Step Two, “Capacity Building”. But in order to complete Step One, “Assessment”, you need to have a coalition functioning at a minimum capacity. These minimum requirements will get you to the point where you can begin your assessment. However, building the capacity of your coalition should be an on-going endeavor as you strive to increase the effectiveness and sustainability of the prevention efforts in your community. Therefore, in the Section below you will also find a “goal” for each standard to continually work towards. (For standards that only have a minimum requirement listed, the goal and the minimum requirement are the same.)

### **Minimum Standards for Coalitions**

#### *1. Meet consistently and frequently*

Coalitions should meet on a regular basis, either bi-weekly (every two weeks), monthly or every other month. Although at certain times meetings need to be cancelled, in general coalitions should be meeting consistently. It is difficult for coalitions to accomplish their goals and maintain momentum with infrequent meetings.

- ❖ The **minimum requirement** is meeting at least bi-monthly (every other month)
- ❖ The **goal** is to meet at least every month.

#### *2. Key prevention stakeholders from the community should be at the table*

Key stakeholders include, but are not limited to, someone from each of these sectors: local government, education, law enforcement, business, youth programs/services, parents, social services, faith community, cultural/ethnic groups, justice system/courts, health services, media, and residents. Examples of representatives from each sector can be found at the end of Section 2A).

Why do you need to have representation from all 13 sectors? The premise is that with all 13 sectors represented, you should have a coalition that mimics the diversity and industry within your community. Each sector will bring something different to the coalition. In addition, the collaboration with each sector will vary depending on participation, causal factors of the consequences in your area, or even community readiness. It is crucial to the success of the coalition that members accurately portray community needs.

When adding representation to your Coalition, think of who you are inviting to the table. For example, a school teacher and a school administrator will both represent the education sector but will bring very different perspectives. Someone from the school district may have less direct experience “in the trenches” but may come with more decision making power (authority) for their sector. CTC refers to this as Formal and Informal Key leaders. You can invite both to your coalition; the balance should depend on your Coalitions needs.

Also keep in mind that your Coalition will need to identify the process for inviting people to the coalition *before* inviting them if there isn’t already a clear process in place. When outlining the process, think about how the Coalition decides who needs to be at the table and how the Coalition gets them there. A place to begin is to look at what sectors are represented. If there is a void, select a member of the Coalition to invite people from the unrepresented sector. **This may take time.** The group as a whole may brainstorm potential stakeholders. Really emphasize “what is in it for (them)” to be active in the Coalition. You want them to buy into the purpose of the coalition.

- ❖ The **minimum requirement** is to have invited a representative from each sector. Further, 60% of the sectors that are already represented on the Coalition need to have attended 65% of the meetings over the last six months (or, if the Coalition is newer than 6 months, over the life of the Coalition.)
- ❖ The **goal** is to get a representative from each sector attending 90% of meetings.

### 3. *Have bylaws and/or guidelines*

Coalitions should create bylaws or other guidelines for how the Coalition functions.

“An effective coalition requires a strong and stable organizational structure that clarifies roles and procedures, and adequately addresses task and maintenance function (Florin, Mitchell, Stevenson, & Klein, 2000). An effective coalition creates a formalized set of structures and practices, such as written roles and procedures (e.g., bylaws), and maintains and distributes meeting minutes. The coalition should develop and maintain quality organizational management strategies such as effective communication, conflict resolution, perception of fairness, and shared decision making. High levels of coalition organizational effectiveness result in a positive work climate, higher member satisfaction and communication among committee members, linkages established with community organizations and less conflict. Effective leadership, leadership development, and staff support are frequently identified as the most essential elements of an effective coalition. Effective leaders are open, task oriented, and supportive to the group.” (Pg. 5, CPRD Research Brief)

Some questions to consider when developing coalition bylaws and/or guidelines are: How is the community structured? How do things get done in the community? How is the leadership structured? How does it change and how long do people remain in leadership positions? What if someone doesn't attend? What are the expectations of participants within the coalition? Your bylaws should outline how decisions are made, how committees are structured, how the leadership is structured, meeting requirements, and membership requirements. From the bylaws it should be clear to all members of your coalition as to what their role and responsibilities are and how the coalition functions.

- ❖ The **minimum requirement** is to have informal bylaws/guidelines.
  - i. Informal refers to unwritten, but agreed upon by the entire coalition.
- ❖ The **goal** is to have formal, written bylaws/guidelines
  - i. They should be reviewed as a coalition bi-annually (every other year).
  - ii. When new members join, they should receive a copy of the current bylaws/guidelines.

### 4. *All meetings should have an agenda and a clear purpose*

Effective coalitions have well defined meeting agendas and a clear purpose for each meeting. This ensures that meetings are worthwhile, productive and stay on track. Otherwise, members may feel Coalition meetings are a waste of their time and attendance may drop.

- ❖ The **minimum requirement** is to have an agenda outlining the purpose for each meeting that is provided to members at each meeting.

### 5. *Meeting minutes are kept.*

At each coalition, a member needs to take minutes. These serve four functions: 1) the person keeping the minutes is tracking the meeting and can help to ensure things don't get “dropped”; 2) members who were unable to attend are able to stay informed; 3) there is continuity between meetings; and 4) there is a written record of the Coalition.

- ❖ The **minimum requirement** is to be collecting minutes from every meeting.
- ❖ The **goal** is to distribute the minutes to the members
  - i. This can be electronically, hard copies or post them on the web.

### 6. *The Coalition has vision and mission statements*

Successful coalitions have developed vision and mission statements. This is a standard that helps guide the direction of the coalition; everything the Coalition does should flow from and follow the mission and vision. You can use the Communities that Care model to guide you in this process.

- ❖ The **minimum requirement** is to have a formal (written) vision and or mission statement.

**Key Stakeholders**

Key prevention stakeholders should include, and are **not limited to**, a representative from each of the following sectors:

**Local government** (i.e. County Commissioner, Mayor, city council representative)

**Education** (i.e. School Administrator, teacher, school board representative, PTA)

**Law enforcement** (i.e. Police chief, local compliance check officer)

**Business** (i.e. Local business manager, small/large business owner, mining/trucking industry)

**Youth programs/services** (i.e. Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Boys and Girls Club, local after-school program director)

**Parents** (i.e. Elementary, middle, or high school parent)

**Social services** (i.e. DCFS, private therapy group, mental health agency, LDS family services)

**Faith community** (i.e. Pastor, Bishop, LDS family services)

**Cultural/ethnic groups** (i.e. Hispanic, Polynesian, deaf or hard of hearing, mining industry, a representative of local agency representing a cultural/ethnic minority)

**Justice system/courts** (i.e. Local judge, parole officer)

**Health services** (i.e. Local health dept, WIC clinic)

**Media** (i.e. Local newspaper, TV, and radio stations)

**Citizens** (i.e. Parent, youth, concerned citizen)

### **Resources**

Communities that Care: <http://preventionplatform.samhsa.gov>

A Perfect World Vision, Edward Ho, PhD, Bach Harrison, L.L.C.

Center for Prevention Research and Development (CPRD) Research Brief: "Evidence-Based Practices for Effective Community Coalitions: a Summary of Current Research."

Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA): <http://www.cadca.org>

Utah State Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health (DSAMH): <http://dsamh.utah.gov>

Substance Abuse Prevention Specialist Training Manuals:  
[http://captus.samhsa.gov/western/resources/prevmat/sapst\\_pilot.cfm](http://captus.samhsa.gov/western/resources/prevmat/sapst_pilot.cfm)